

O. GENE DISHNER
DIRECTOR



DIVISIONS
ENERGY
GAS AND OIL
MINED LAND RECLAMATION
MINERAL MINING
MINERAL RESOURCES
MINES
ADMINISTRATION

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Ninth Street Office Building / 8th Floor

202 North Ninth Street

Richmond, Virginia 23219-3402

(804) 692-3200 FAX (804) 692-3237

www.dmme.virginia.gov

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Contact: Mike Abbott (276) 523-8146

Cell (276) 356-3405

Arch Mineral, Alpha Resources Renew Coal Mine Rescue Services Contracts with State of Virginia

Big Stone Gap, VA – Two southwest Virginia coal companies recently renewed contracts to provide the services of their mine rescue teams to approximately 50 small coal mining operations throughout the coalfield, the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (DMME) announced today. Mine rescue teams from Arch Mineral's Lone Mountain Processing operations and Alpha Resources teams from the Dickenson-Russell and Paramount Coal Virginia Operations renewed their annual contract to continue participating in Virginia's State Designated Mine Rescue Program.

"Mine rescue teams are one of the coal industry's most important safety insurance investments", said Benny Wampler, DMME Deputy Director. "We must invest in preparing and equipping these teams for an event we pray never occurs. But if needed, just like any insurance, you can't afford to be without it. We are most fortunate in Virginia to have high quality mine rescue teams sponsored by coal companies that are willing to participate in Virginia's State Designated Mine Rescue Program for the overall benefit of our coal mining industry."

Federal mining regulations require that mine rescue teams be available for rescue and recovery work to each underground coal or other mine in the event of an emergency. The costs of making advanced arrangements for such teams must be borne by the operator of each mine. This requirement represents a challenge to the small underground mine operator employing a dozen or fewer miners.

In 1985, Virginia implemented a unique approach to meeting this requirement by providing initial mine emergency response and rescue capabilities to small mine operations through the

State Designated Mine Rescue Team Program, administered through the DMME. The program assigns at least two well trained and equipped mine rescue teams from Virginia's coal industry and under contract to the state to each participating underground mine. The teams are assigned to underground coal mine operations who elect to enter into a contractual agreement with DMME for state designated mine rescue team services. Participating mine operations pay a \$2400 annual fee, which provides approximately \$100,000 annually for distribution to the mine rescue teams.

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